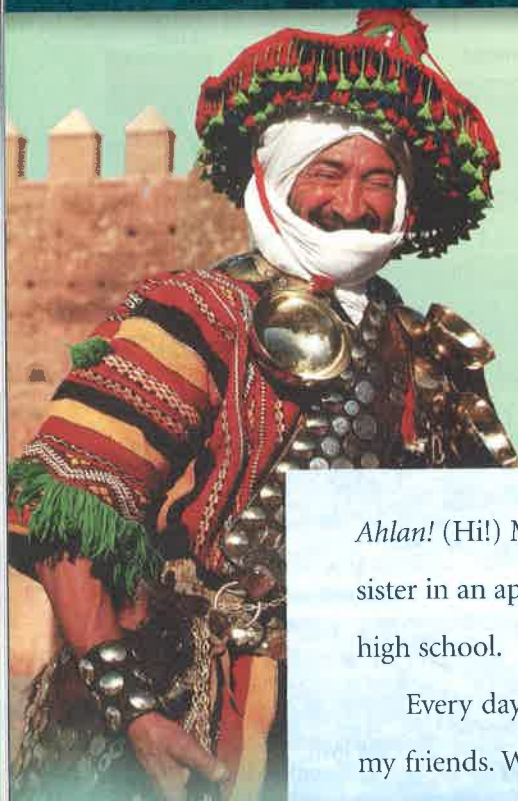


# North Africa

*North Africa includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Western Sahara, which is occupied by Morocco. The culture and politics of the region are closely tied to Southwest Asia and Europe.*

Pendant from Algeria



Moroccan water seller



*Ahlan!* (Hi!) My name is Shaimaa, and I am 18. I live with my mother and my little sister in an apartment about one hour from downtown Cairo. I am in my third year of high school.

Every day but Friday, I get up at 7:00 A.M., drink a glass of milk, and then meet my friends. We travel to school together on the metro (mass transit). My school is an all-girls school. I am in the humanities and social sciences track, so I am studying philosophy, psychology, Arabic, English, and history, my favorite. We all have religious education in school also—I study Islam with the other Muslim girls while the Christian girls meet with their religious teacher. At about 3:00 P.M., I get home from school, eat a big lunch of chicken and vegetables, and sleep for a couple of hours. When I wake up, I have a lot of homework—about six hours' worth. At 10:00 P.M., we have another small meal of cheese, yogurt, or beans before bedtime.

On Fridays I go to movies with my girlfriends and walk along the Nile River, or I stay home and listen to music. Sometimes I take a taxi to the beach with my family. For big holidays, we go to the mosque very early in the morning. Then we go to my grandmother's house with my 12 aunts and uncles and 16 cousins! After Ramadan (an Islamic holy month), we put on our new clothes and go around to all my relatives' houses, where we get presents of new money.





# Section 1

## Natural Environments

### READ TO DISCOVER

1. What landform regions are found in North Africa?
2. What factors influence the region's climates?
3. What natural resources does the region have?

### WHY IT MATTERS

North Africa is part of the world's largest desert region. Use [onfyi.com](http://onfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about the cultures, landscapes, and ways of life in very dry places.

### DEFINE

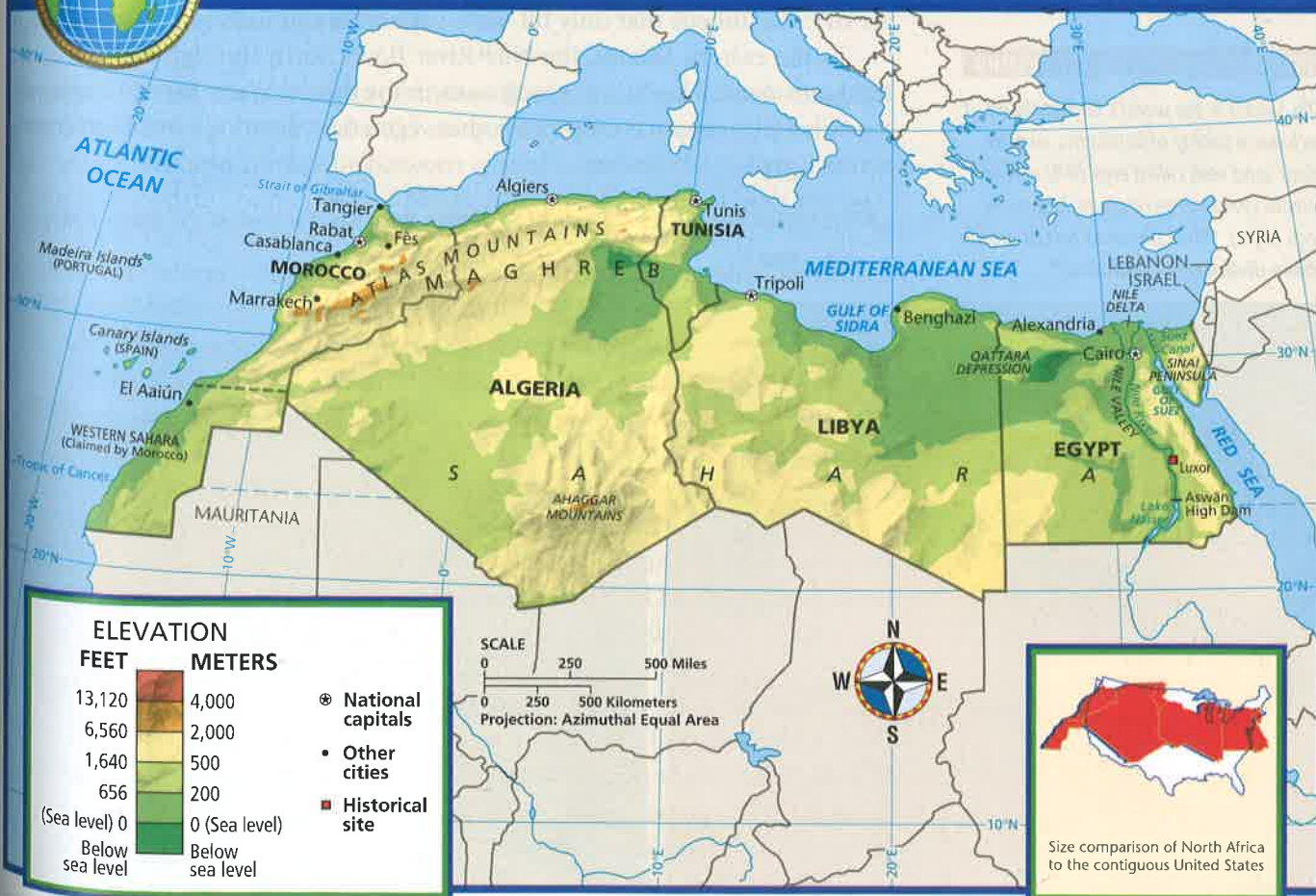
erg  
reg  
depressions  
wadis

### LOCATE

Atlantic Ocean	Sahara
Red Sea	Qattara Depression
Mediterranean Sea	Nile River
Atlas Mountains	Strait of Gibraltar



### North Africa: Physical-Political





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North Africa



## Landforms

North Africa stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. On the north it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea. Coastal plains are the main landforms where North Africa meets the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. From Morocco to Tunisia, the coastal plains quickly give way to the Atlas Mountains. These mountains run parallel to the Atlantic and Mediterranean coasts from northern Tunisia to the Atlantic Ocean. The Sahara is the world's largest desert. It lies south of the Atlas Mountains and coastal plains. The Sahara extends across all of North Africa. This vast desert acts as a natural barrier between North Africa and the rest of the African continent.

Over thousands of years, the Sahara has undergone cycles of wet and dry periods. At times there has been enough rain to support grasslands and abundant animal life. However, most of the Sahara today is a barren expanse of rock and sand. The great desert covers about 3.5 million square miles (9 million sq km) of land—roughly the size of the entire United States. Because there are few plants, wind and rain can erode the land easily. As a result, bare rock surfaces are common. The basins below these rocky ridges fill with eroded sediment. Some basins are covered with high, shifting sand dunes that create a sea of sand, called an **erg**. In other areas, wind blows the sand and dust away, leaving a gravel-covered plain. This type of eroded landform is called a **reg**.

The Sahara also has large low areas called **depressions**. In Egypt the Qattara Depression, 440 feet (134 m) below sea level, is a wilderness of quicksand and salt marsh. Other depressions have large dry lakebeds where water briefly collects during rare rainstorms. Rainwater also carves out **wadis**, which are dry streambeds that only fill with water after rain falls.

In the eastern Sahara, the Nile River flows north through Egypt into the Mediterranean. The Nile is a long oasis in the desert. Water from the river and the Nile Delta supports crops and other vegetation, creating a fertile green strip across Egypt.

### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*The Sahara is the world's largest desert. It includes a variety of landforms, such as giant sand seas called ergs (left) and extensive gravel-covered plains known as regs (right). What physical forces create these distinctive landforms?*



### READING CHECK:

**Physical Systems**

What has characterized the climatic history of the Sahara?







*The thorny argan tree is found mainly in Morocco. Goats climb these trees to eat the olive-like fruit that they produce.*

## Climates, Plants, and Animals

Most of North Africa's vegetation and wildlife are restricted to the areas with a Mediterranean climate. In the Sahara, plants and animals must be very hardy to survive. Temperatures there can climb above 130°F (54°C) in the summer. They can drop to below freezing in the winter. As in other desert areas, the daily range of temperatures is also great. Daytime temperatures are very hot, but at night, temperatures cool dramatically.

**Climates** North Africa's Mediterranean climate areas are found along the coast. Warm dry summers and mild rainy winters are common there. Some areas with a semiarid climate lie between coastal areas and the Sahara.

An arid climate covers most of North Africa. A subtropical high-pressure system keeps the region very dry. The system creates a wide band of dry lands, of which the Sahara is a part, across Asia and Africa. A rain shadow caused by the Atlas Mountains also contributes to the region's dry climate. A hot dry wind called the harmattan (har-muh-TAN) often sweeps southward across the Sahara. In the Saharan ergs, the winds can cause violent sandstorms that block out sunlight for days. Sometimes hot desert winds blow Saharan dust across the Atlantic Ocean to the Caribbean and the southern United States.

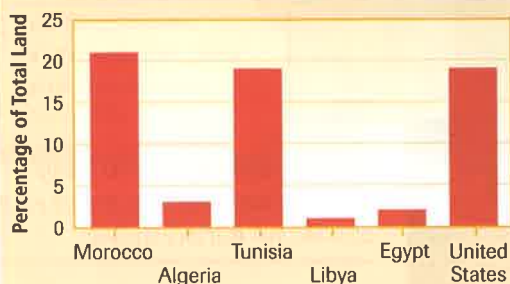
**Plants and Animals** Vegetation in the Sahara is limited to grasses and short shrubs. Few trees can grow in such dry regions. Plants and animals are concentrated around oases, where there are sources of water. Date palms are found around oases. Insects, snails, and small reptiles are common, along with a few larger animals such as gazelles and hyenas.

Morocco, in particular, has a great diversity of plant and animal life. The country is close to Europe, separated by just 8 miles (13 km) across the Strait of Gibraltar. As a result, many European as well as African species of plants and animals are found in Morocco. Also, migratory birds pass through Morocco every year as they fly between Europe and Africa. The country also has forests in the mountains.



The highest temperature ever recorded on Earth was 136°F (58°C) on the northern edge of the Sahara in Libya.

### Arable Land



Source: Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook* 2001

**INTERPRETING THE GRAPH** Morocco and Tunisia have the highest percentage of arable land in North Africa, while Algeria, Libya, and Egypt have a far lower percentage. Based on the graph, what can you infer about environmental conditions in the different countries of North Africa?

Egypt also has abundant bird life. More than 300 species of birds are found in the Nile Valley and Nile Delta. These include the egret, flamingo, golden oriole, heron, pelican, and stork. The bird life in Egypt benefits from the great variety of plant life along the Nile River. However, outside of the Nile Valley and Delta, Egypt is almost all desert, with limited plant and animal life. This is true of most of Algeria and Libya as well. Tunisia's milder climates support forests, grasslands, and many kinds of animals.

✓ **READING CHECK: Places and Regions** What two factors create the Sahara's dry climate?

## Natural Resources

Oil and natural gas are North Africa's most valuable natural resources. Oil is found in every country in North Africa, but Libya has the largest reserves. Other important resources include iron ore, lead, phosphates, and zinc.

There are rich fishing grounds off Morocco's Atlantic coast. The main catch is sardines. Fishers there catch more than 350,000 tons of sardines every year. In fact, Morocco is the world's largest exporter of this type of fish.

Although much of North Africa is desert, rain or irrigation makes farming possible in areas with good soil. The region produces many crops, including grapes, olives, dates, grains, and vegetables. River water irrigates fields all along the Nile and in the Nile Delta. These farmlands have helped make Egypt an important cotton producer. Rice is also an important crop in the Nile Valley. Farmers in the desert oases of Algeria, Libya, and Egypt grow crops such as date palms.

✓ **READING CHECK: Environment and Society** Where do farmers in Egypt get water for growing crops?



## Review

**Define** erg, reg, depressions, wadis

### Working with Sketch Maps

On a map of North Africa that you draw or that your teacher provides, label the countries of the region and Atlantic Ocean, Red Sea, Mediterranean Sea, Atlas Mountains, Sahara, Qattara Depression, Nile River, and Strait of Gibraltar. In the margin of your map, identify the shortest water crossing between Africa and Europe.

### Reading for the Main Idea

- Physical Systems** How is an erg formed? How is a reg formed?
- Places and Regions** Where are the region's wettest climates located?
- Physical Systems** What is one reason that Morocco's plant and animal life is so diverse?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** In what way might the Mediterranean Sea be considered an important natural resource in the region?



### Organizing What You Know

- Create a chart like the one shown below. Use the chart to list and describe the region's climates, plants and animals, and natural resources.

Climates	Plants and animals	Natural resources



# History and Culture

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. What peoples have settled in and ruled North Africa?
2. What are the people and culture of the region like today?

## WHY IT MATTERS

Archaeological discoveries in Egypt and other parts of North Africa tell us much about early human history. Use [onfyi.com](http://onfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about recent archaeological research in the region.

## IDENTIFY

Berbers

## DEFINE

silt  
pharaohs  
hieroglyphs

## LOCATE

Alexandria  
Cairo  
Marrakech  
Maghreb  
Suez Canal  
Sinai Peninsula  
Casablanca  
Fès

## History

The first people in North Africa were hunter-gatherers. They lived in areas where the climates were best. By 4000 B.C., much of North Africa had become desert. The human population became concentrated along the Mediterranean coast, desert oases, wadis, and the Nile River. Every year, the Nile would flood. These floods spread **silt**, which is fertile finely ground soil, over the river's banks.

**Early Peoples** Beginning about 3000 B.C., a great civilization grew along the Nile River and its delta in Egypt. A series of kingdoms arose, ruled by monarchs called **pharaohs**. These rulers were considered gods and had complete power over the Egyptian people. The Egyptians built great pyramids and other monuments that still stand today. They developed a writing system that used pictures and symbols called **hieroglyphs**. Egyptian astronomers created a 365-day calendar. They also learned to predict the annual floods of the Nile. Every year, when Sirius—the brightest star in the sky—appeared above the horizon at sunrise, the flood would soon follow. Because the Egyptians depended on the Nile's floods for farming, this information was key to their survival. From 1570 B.C. to 1085 B.C., Egypt expanded its power into the area that is now Syria, Israel, and Libya.

Later, as Egyptian power weakened, foreigners began to control much of North Africa. Those foreigners included the Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans. The



*This ancient Egyptian illustration from the Book of the Dead shows Horus, the falcon-god, introducing an Egyptian to the presence of Osiris, god of the underworld. The Book of the Dead was a collection of texts, spells, and formulas placed in tombs to help the dead in the afterlife. It contains many outstanding examples of ancient Egyptian art.*



*In Greek mythology, the giant Atlas held the world on his shoulders somewhere near the western end of North Africa. The Atlas Mountains are named for him. In the 1500s, collections of maps or charts came to be called atlases because mapmakers included images of Atlas holding Earth in them.*



Phoenicians were sailors and traders from what is now Lebanon. They set up many Mediterranean trading colonies such as Carthage, which was founded in about 800 B.C. in modern-day Tunisia. Alexander the Great, at the head of a Greek army, founded the city of Alexandria in Egypt in 332 B.C. The Roman Empire became a great power in North Africa after it destroyed Carthage in 146 B.C. After the Roman Empire crumbled in the A.D. 400s, a Germanic tribe called the Vandals moved south through Spain into Africa. They set up a kingdom in what is now Libya. In the A.D. 500s the Byzantine Empire, which had been the Eastern Roman Empire, recaptured most of North Africa.

**The Arabs and Islam** Byzantine rule over North Africa was short-lived. In the 600s Arab armies from Southwest Asia swept across North Africa. They reached Africa's Atlantic coast and conquered Morocco by the early 700s. Arab armies also crossed into Iberia in the year 711. Most people in North Africa became Muslims. In addition, Arabic became the main language of the area.

Under Arab rule, Cairo and other North African cities became great centers of Islamic culture and education. Cities like Marrakech in Morocco became centers of trade between central and western Africa, Europe, and Arabia. Such cities grew rich trading gold, ivory, and spices as well as slaves. However, in the 1500s outsiders again invaded North Africa. The Ottomans—Muslims based in what is now Turkey—took control first of Egypt and then of Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What religion and language did the Arabs bring to North Africa?

#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*French colonists in Algeria found that the region was perfect for vineyards, and Algerian wine became a major export under French rule. However, it is mainly produced for export because most Algerians are Muslim and are forbidden to drink alcohol. How did cultural patterns influence the diffusion of crops to Algeria and affect the country's cultural landscapes?*

**Colonialism** The Ottoman Empire ruled much of North Africa until the late 1800s. Earlier in that century, western European powers had begun to take over parts of the region. Beginning in the 1830s, France moved to control the Maghreb (West), including Tunisia, Algeria, and part of Morocco. Spain took





control of northern Morocco. Thousands of French, Spaniards, and Italians settled in North Africa in the decades that followed. More than 100 years later, the large number of French living in Algeria would complicate that country's struggle for independence.

In 1882 Great Britain took over Egypt. Britain wanted control of the Suez Canal, which connects the Mediterranean with the Red Sea. The canal was an important trade link between Europe and Britain's colony of India. Italy completed the European conquest of North Africa by taking Libya from the Ottoman Empire in 1912.

**Independence** North Africans resented European rule. They did not have the same rights as the European settlers. Over time North Africans worked to win their independence. In 1922 Egypt gained limited independence from Great Britain. However, independence efforts across the region became stronger after World War II ended in 1945.

In 1952 a group of Egyptian military officers led a revolution that brought complete independence from Britain. France granted Tunisia and Morocco their independence in 1956. Yet the French fought a bloody war to hold on to Algeria. When Algeria finally won independence in 1962, most of the French population left.

Libya became an independent kingdom in 1951. In 1969, military officers led by Mu'ammarr Gadhafi overthrew the monarchy. Gadhafi declared the country a socialist republic and adopted anti-Western policies.

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Human Systems** How did independence affect Algeria's human geography?



## Culture

The countries of North Africa share a similar history and Muslim culture. Still, there is a great deal of variation among them.

**People and Languages** Nearly all of the people of North Africa consider themselves Arab or Arab-Berber. The **Berbers** are a cultural group that lived in North Africa long before waves of Arab armies crossed the continent. Also, small groups of desert nomads called Bedouins live along the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt.

Arabic is the official language of every country in North Africa. However, the people of each country speak their own version of Arabic. In some rural areas Berber dialects are also common. Because of the influence of colonization, many people also speak European languages. French is still widely used in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Italian is spoken in Libya, and English is used in Egypt.

**Settlement and Land Use** Most North Africans live along the Mediterranean coast or in the foothills of the Atlas Mountains. An exception to this pattern is found in Egypt. About 99 percent of that country's 69 million people live in the Nile Valley and Delta. Together, those populated areas make up only 3 percent of Egypt's land. Cairo, Egypt's



## Naguib Mahfouz

In 1988 Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz became the first Arab to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature. Mahfouz was born in Cairo in 1911. He has written some 40 novels and short story collections as well as many plays and screenplays.

Mahfouz's first books were set in ancient Egypt. Later works dealt with contemporary subjects. In *The Cairo Trilogy*, for example, the story of a large middle-class Egyptian family connects to colonial and modern political history.

Mahfouz has often written about social issues, such as the status of women and political prisoners. *Children of the Alley* features characters that symbolize Adam, Moses, and other religious figures. Some people criticized the book, saying it was disrespectful to Islam. Nevertheless, Mahfouz is one of the region's most respected writers.

**Evaluating** If you were to write a novel about North Africa, which parts of its history or culture would you use as background? Why would you choose those topics?



capital, lies in the Nile Delta. With a population of more than 10 million, Cairo is the largest urban area in North Africa. Egypt also has the largest population of any Arab country.

Urban overcrowding is a problem across all of North Africa. People from the countryside are pouring into cities in hopes of finding work and a better life. Casablanca, the largest city in Morocco, must absorb about 30,000 new migrants every year.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* In what areas are most of the population of North Africa found?



### FOCUS ON CULTURE

**The Medina** Most old Arab cities in North Africa developed within the protective walls of a Casbah, or fort. As the population of the city grew, the buildings within the city's walls were built higher and closer together. Space was limited, and streets were as narrow as possible, often twisting at odd angles. The high walls and narrow streets also created shade that kept people and buildings cool in the hot climate.

When colonial governments took over North Africa, they built European-style cities around the old Arab city, or medina. However, people did not abandon the medina for the wide boulevards and spacious air-conditioned buildings of newer areas. Many medinas in North Africa remain lively places where people live and go for social interaction, shopping, and prayer. One of the most famous medinas in the world is in Fès, Morocco. There, tens of thousands of people crowd into a square mile of densely packed buildings.

✓ **READING CHECK:** *Human Systems* What are the medinas of old Arab cities of the region like?



#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*The medina in Tunis was built during the A.D. 600s and is the cultural and historical focus of the city. During the colonial era, the French built a new area around the medina known as the ville nouvelle, or "new city." What architectural features can you see in the photo that are typically found in medinas?*





**Religion** Most North Africans are Muslim, except for very small Christian and Jewish minorities. Islam plays a major role in North African life. For example, the five daily prayers punctuate life and mark the time for appointments. In addition, Fridays are special days when Muslims meet in mosques for prayer. In many cities across North Africa, businesses close on Thursday and Friday before opening again on Saturday. Businesses also close early for religious holidays, such as *Id al-Adha*. During this holiday, Muslim families sacrifice a sheep in honor of the willingness of Abraham to sacrifice his own son to prove his devotion to Allah. Islamic holidays are celebrated according to a lunar calendar. As a result, holidays shift over the years, being celebrated earlier each year according to the Western calendar.

**Traditions and Customs** Many North Africans wear traditional clothing. While there are many regional variations, in general North African clothing is long and loose. Such styles are ideal for the region's hot climates. Men and women often wear caftans and hooded robes made with a variety of fabrics. In Egypt the caftan and the *gallibiya*, or pants and a long shirtlike garment, are popular. Many women dress according to Muslim tradition. Their clothing covers all of the body except the face and hands.

When people greet each other in the street, they often shake hands and then touch their hand to their heart. If they are family or very close friends, they will kiss each other on the cheek. The number and pattern of the kisses vary from country to country.

Celebrations such as marriages are very important to North Africans because the family is central in Arab culture. Weddings can last for several days. Except for the last day of the wedding, the women's and men's celebrations are held separately.

✓ **READING CHECK:** **Human Systems** How and why are traditional clothes of different North African countries generally similar?



#### INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Cafés are popular places for men to socialize throughout North Africa. There, they play chess or dominoes, talk, or simply watch people passing by on the street. Most women socialize only at home.*

*How are the social customs of cafés in North Africa different from those of cafés in this country?*



## Review

**Identify** Berbers

**Define** silt, pharaohs, hieroglyphs

### Working with Sketch Maps

On the map you created in Section 1, label Alexandria, Cairo, Marrakech, Maghreb, Suez Canal, Sinai Peninsula, Casablanca, and Fès. Which city was founded by Alexander the Great?

### Reading for the Main Idea

1. **Human Systems** Who were some early peoples that ruled over areas of North Africa?
2. **Human Systems** Why was control of the Suez Canal important to the British Empire?
3. **Places and Regions** What is the main ethnic group, language, and religion in the region?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Identifying Cause and Effect** Why do many people in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia speak French as a second language today?

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### Organizing What You Know

5. Create a time line like the one shown below. On your time line, list important years, periods, and events in the history of North Africa.





# The Region Today

## READ TO DISCOVER

1. What are economies and cities of North Africa like?
2. What challenges do the people there face?

## WHY IT MATTERS

The politics of North Africa today are strongly influenced by Islamic fundamentalism. Use [cnnfyi.com](http://cnnfyi.com) or other **current events** sources to learn about how this movement affects countries in other parts of the world.

## DEFINE

**free port**

**fellahin**

## LOCATE

Tangier

Luxor

Tripoli

Tunis

Algiers

Aswān High Dam

## INTERPRETING THE VISUAL RECORD

*Economic development and rapid population growth affect life in large North African cities such as Cairo. The city's famous pyramids, visible in the background, are increasingly hemmed in by the sprawl of Africa's largest city. Based on the photo, what environmental and urban problems do you think residents of Cairo face?*

## Economic and Urban Environments

The countries of North Africa face issues typical of developing countries. These issues include controlling government spending, keeping inflation down, and reducing restrictions on businesses and foreign trade. Morocco has tried to address the last of these issues by giving the city of Tangier status as a **free port**. A free port is one where almost no taxes are placed on the goods unloaded there from other places.

Morocco and the other North African countries have taken other steps to strengthen economic ties with Europe. For example, in the late 1990s Tunisia entered an association agreement with the European Union. This agreement aims to improve trade between Tunisia and EU countries.

**Economic Activities** Oil and natural gas production form the backbone of the Libyan and Algerian economies. Egypt and Tunisia also have significant oil industries. When oil prices are high, these countries benefit. When prices are low, their economies weaken. As a result, they are trying to diversify their economies so they do not rely so much on oil and gas.

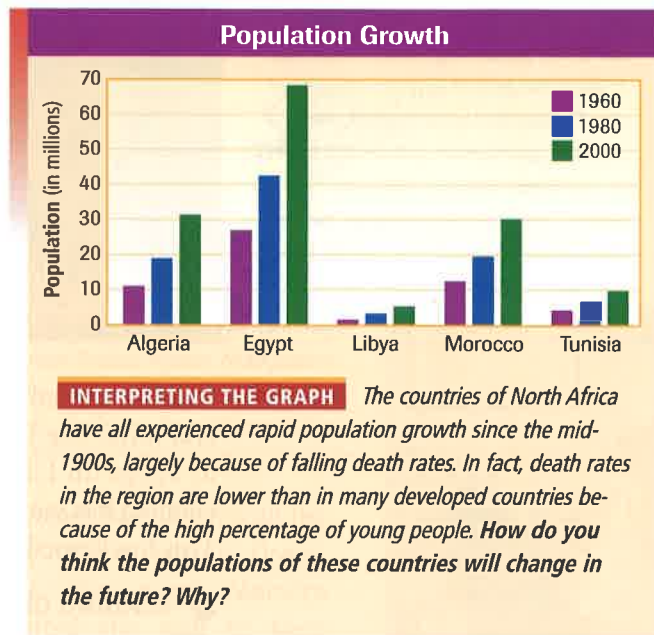
Agriculture is also a very important part of this region's economy, despite the dry climates. In Egypt millions of **fellahin**, or peasant farmers, work the fertile land along the Nile Valley. The fellahin make up about 40 percent of the Egyptian work force. The only country in North Africa that does not have a strong farming sector is Libya, which must import about 75 percent of its food.





Another important economic activity in North Africa is tourism. It is particularly important in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia. All three of these countries, and Algeria as well, have worked hard to attract tourism. However, in Algeria tourism almost entirely collapsed after political violence began in 1992. Tourism in Egypt also suffered a blow in 1997 when terrorists killed a group of foreign tourists at the ancient ruins of Luxor. Since then, tourism has slowly improved in Egypt but remains low in Algeria.

As you can see, the region has rich resources and productive industries. However, there still are not enough jobs. Rapid population growth makes this problem worse. In Libya and Algeria unemployment is as high as 30 percent. Many skilled and educated North Africans leave the region. They often find better jobs in Europe or in oil-rich Arab countries in Southwest Asia.



**Urban Environments** Among the largest cities in North Africa are Casablanca, in Morocco, and the capitals of the region's countries. Those capitals include Cairo, Egypt; Tripoli, Libya; Tunis, Tunisia; and Algiers, Algeria. These cities have a mix of modern and traditional buildings. Many large cities in North Africa are becoming more crowded as the region's population grows. At the same time, large numbers of people continue to migrate from the countryside to the cities. Thus, these large cities have grown outward with a ring of crowded slums surrounding the older core.

In cities such as Cairo, there is not enough housing. People crowd into slums, even setting up tents on rooftops or in rowboats along the Nile. Communities have even developed in cemeteries, where people convert tombs into bedrooms and kitchens.

**READING CHECK: Human Systems** How has rapid population growth been a problem for the region's economies and cities?

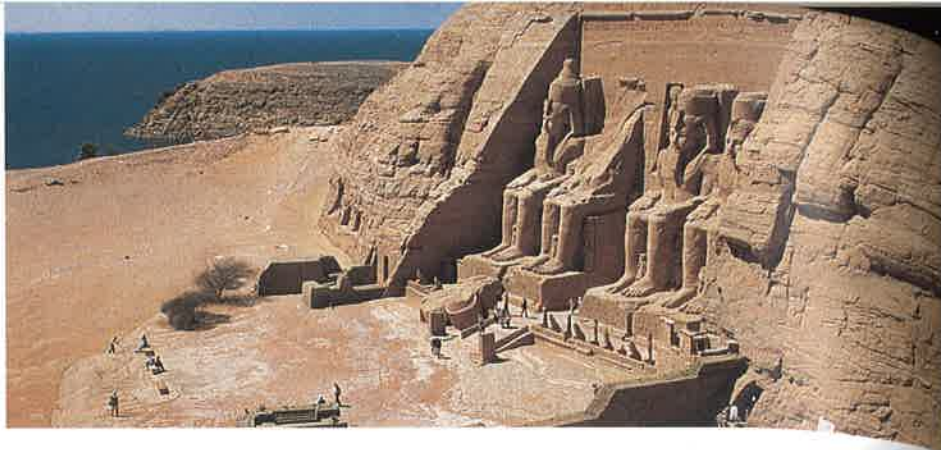
## Issues and Challenges

The countries of North Africa share many of the same issues and challenges. Among these challenges are poverty and political unrest. The region also has some of the same political and social problems that face its Arab neighbors in Southwest Asia.

**Political Issues** Islam has long been an important factor in North African politics. Today many Islamic fundamentalists believe that government should be based strictly on the laws of Islam. For the most part, the region's governments want to limit the role of Islam. Sometimes this leads to violent clashes. For example, in Algeria in 1992, an Islamic party seemed set to win an election and take power. To keep this from happening, the government canceled the election and suspended parliament. Violence broke out, and the country was soon involved in a civil war. Since then thousands have died despite some progress in efforts to end the fighting.



In the 1950s, when the planned construction of the Aswān High Dam threatened to flood the ancient Egyptian temples of Abu Simbel, the United Nations and Egyptian government sponsored a project to save them. Between 1963 and 1968 a team of engineers disassembled the temples and moved them to a new location that was more than 200 feet (60 m) higher, thus saving them from destruction.



The United States has been involved in the politics of North Africa in several ways. The United States gives large amounts of military and economic aid to Egypt. In Libya, Mu‘ammar Gadhafi has pursued anti-American policies. Gadhafi has seen himself as a leader of all Arabs and a defender of Arab causes. This has caused clashes between the Libyan and U.S. governments.

✓ **READING CHECK: Human Systems** What religion plays an important role in the region’s politics? Why?



The Nile River is the world’s longest river. It begins in eastern Africa and flows northward for 4,160 miles (6,693 km) to the Mediterranean Sea.

**Environmental Challenges** Environmental issues in North Africa include desertification, pollution from oil refining, and polluted water supplies. In Egypt the environmental health of the Nile is currently a major concern. Construction of the Aswān High Dam across the upper Nile River was begun in 1960. Once completed, the dam became a major source of hydroelectric power. The reserves of water stored behind the dam provide water for crops year-round. This water also lets farmers open up new land for farming. These have been important benefits.

However, the dam has also stopped the annual flooding of the Nile. Before the dam was built, fields along the river were renewed every year by new deposits of silt. Now Egyptian farmers must buy fertilizer to keep the soil productive. The fertilizers have polluted the Nile and crippled the Egyptian fishing industry. Also, without the silt, the Nile Delta is slowly shrinking, and the Mediterranean coast is suffering from severe erosion.

✓ **READING CHECK: Environment and Society** How has the heavy use of fertilizers affected the Nile?



## Review



**Define** free port, fellahin

**Working with Sketch Maps** On the map you created in Section 2, label Tangier, Luxor, Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Aswān High Dam. What is Egypt’s source of hydroelectric power?

**Reading for the Main Idea**

1. **Human Systems** What problems face the petroleum industry in North Africa?

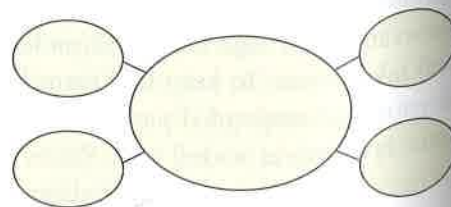
2. **Human Systems** What helps make tourism an important industry in North Africa?
3. **Human Systems** What are some issues facing cities in North Africa?

**Critical Thinking**

4. **Analyzing Information** How might the physical geography of the region contribute to the overcrowding of its cities?

**Organizing What You Know**

5. Create a word web like the one below. Use it to describe the positive and negative effects of building the Aswān High Dam for Egypt.





# Geography for Life

## Western Sahara

The phrase *Western Sahara* refers to more than a part of Africa's great desert. It is also a political unit—the only one in Africa that is not independent.

Western Sahara lies on Africa's northwest Atlantic coast. It shares borders with Algeria, Mauritania, and Morocco. Western Sahara was a Spanish colony from 1884 to 1976. When Spain withdrew from the area, no one was left as the clear authority. Three groups wanted to control Western Sahara. Both Morocco and Mauritania claimed the area. However, the Saharawis, the region's indigenous nomadic people, wanted self-rule. The Polisario—a nationalist organization—represented the Saharawis and opposed occupation by the other countries. Morocco moved some of its citizens into the western part of the disputed land. In return, the Polisario proclaimed independence. Following a change within its own government, Mauritania pulled out of Western Sahara in 1979.

During the 1980s Morocco built a sand wall along the border between Western Sahara and Mauritania. It

Two Saharawi leaders arrive for a meeting near Tindouf, Algeria, headquarters of the Polisario Front and home to thousands of refugees from Western Sahara.



stretches from Algeria all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. (See the map.) Morocco wanted the wall to keep Polisario troops from entering the western portion of the territory and southern Morocco. In 1988 Morocco and the Polisario accepted a United Nations peace plan, which was followed in 1991

by a cease-fire. In the year of the cease-fire, the UN also established a settlement. As part of the plan, the UN was to poll the people of Western Sahara for their views. They would be asked if they wanted official union with Morocco or independence. However, it was difficult to compile a list of eligible voters. In addition, the Moroccans continued to fortify the sand wall they had constructed. They also denied UN monitors easy travel through occupied Western Sahara. While governments quarrel over their land, many Saharawis wait in refugee camps in Algeria.

Morocco and the Polisario still disagree. The main dispute involves identifying who should be allowed to vote, which further delays the election. Morocco takes advantage of the delays by moving even more people to the region. Morocco also continues to exploit Western Sahara's mineral resources. Meanwhile, the UN tries to maintain the cease-fire and avoid armed conflict.



**INTERPRETING THE MAP** The Moroccan defensive wall built in the 1980s stretches across much of Western Sahara, which Morocco claims. Based on the map, about how long is the wall? Where is it in relation to the settlements in the region?

### Applying What You Know

- Summarizing** Why is there a conflict between the Saharawi people and Morocco?
- Analyzing Maps** Examine the map. How does the distribution of resources affect which part of Western Sahara Morocco most wants to control? How is Morocco exercising this control?



# CHAPTER 21

# Review

## Building Vocabulary

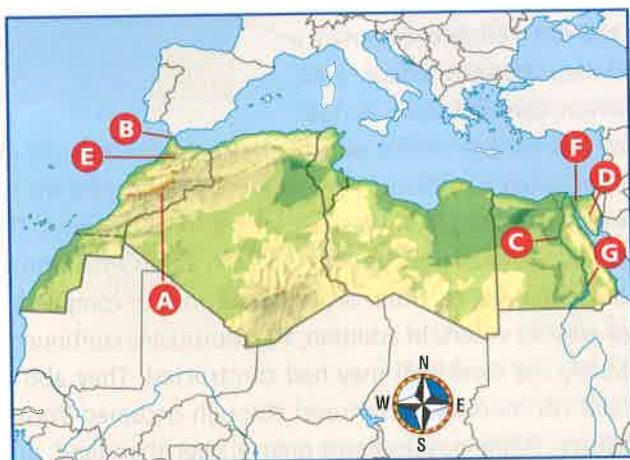
On a separate sheet of paper, explain the following terms by using them correctly in sentences.

erg	wadis	hieroglyphs
reg	silt	free port
depressions	pharaohs	fellahin

## Locating Key Places

On a separate sheet of paper, match the letters on the map with their correct labels.

Atlas Mountains	Sinai Peninsula
Nile River	Fès
Strait of Gibraltar	Aswān High Dam
Suez Canal	



## Understanding the Main Ideas

### Section 1

- Physical Systems** How have wind and water shaped important physical features of the Sahara?
- Places and Regions** Why are plants and animals in Egypt limited mostly to areas along the Nile Valley and Delta?

### Section 2

- Human Systems** Which ethnic group makes up the majority of North Africa's population? When did this ethnic group first move into North Africa?
- Places and Regions** What is the main religion of North Africa? What are two minority religions there?

### Section 3

- Places and Regions** Why have many people in the region left to find work elsewhere? What has made the problem worse?

## Thinking Critically

- Drawing Inferences** Look at a world map. In what ways do you think the Suez Canal has influenced trade routes and patterns since it was built? Why might changes in these trade patterns have been important to European countries?
- Analyzing** In what ways does Islam influence the political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics of the region?
- Drawing Inferences and Conclusions** What do you think would be the effects of removing the Aswān High Dam?

## Using the Geographer's Tools

- Analyzing Photographs** Look at the photograph of the medina in Section 2. How does it compare to the layout of your community's oldest area? What activities do you find in each?
- Analyzing Statistics** Review the Fast Facts and Comparing Standard of Living tables at the beginning of the unit. Then rank the levels of economic development and standard of living of the region's countries, from highest to lowest. Write a paragraph explaining your rankings. Note which statistics you believe were most important in your ranking.
- Preparing Maps** Create a map of the region that shows important agricultural areas. Shade the countries that have oil. Finally, label the Aswān High Dam and identify its importance as an energy resource.

## Writing about Geography

Review what you read in Unit 6 about the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in Southwest Asia. Then write a report comparing the importance of major rivers to the history and economies of Southwest Asia and North Africa. What role did the rivers play in the development of early civilizations in each region? Why? When you are finished with your report, proofread it to make sure you have used standard grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and punctuation.

SKILL BUILDING

**Geography for Life**

**Analyzing Geographic Information**

**Environment and Society** Find some recipes from North Africa and determine whether the dishes are similar to Southwest Asian, European, other African cuisine, or a mixture. Then compare the ingredients with typical crops and farm animals from the region. Which products are used most often? Write a paragraph describing your findings.



## Interpreting Satellite Images

Study this satellite image of the Nile Delta in Egypt. Cultivated areas are shown in red. Then use the information from the image to help you answer the questions that follow.



1. According to this satellite image, the Nile Delta is
  - a. not cultivated.
  - b. only partly cultivated.
  - c. highly cultivated.
  - d. mostly desert.

2. Which areas in the satellite image would you expect to be densely populated? Why?

## Building Vocabulary

To build your vocabulary skills, answer the following questions. Mark your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

3. *Silt* is
  - a. fertile finely ground soil.
  - b. a fine fabric.
  - c. a sea of sand.
  - d. a type of veil.
4. The caravan of traders experienced many difficulties while crossing a *depression*. In which sentence does depression have the same meaning as it does in the sentence above?
  - a. A tropical depression is beginning to form in the gulf.
  - b. A salt marsh is located at the southern edge of the depression.
  - c. The depression in the cotton market took the merchants by surprise.
  - d. By the third day of the sandstorm, a slight depression had set in among the tourists.

## Alternative Assessment

### PORTFOLIO ACTIVITY



### Learning about Your Local Geography

#### Group Project: Research

Is there an abundant supply of drinking water where you live? Does your community have to carefully protect its water resources? Work with a partner to research the location of the water resources available to your community. Find out about the quality of the water and what you can do as an individual to protect your water resources from pollution. Interview officials from your city government about any water management plans they have for the future. Create a map that illustrates some of the information you gathered. Finally, prepare a short report comparing the water resources of your state and those of North Africa.

### Internet connect

**Internet Activity:** [go.hrw.com](http://go.hrw.com)

**KEYWORD:** SW3 GT21

Choose a topic on North Africa to:

- learn about ergs, regs, and other desert features and send a postcard from the Sahara.
- create a brochure on the design, construction, and function of the pyramids of ancient Egypt.
- take the GeoMap challenge and test your knowledge of North Africa's geography!

